

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT

Terms of Reference Consultancy for SVG-HDSD-CS-INDV-71

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHING ASSISTANTS FOR BEQUIA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (GOSVG) has received funding from the World Bank (WB) towards the implementation of the Human Development Service Delivery (HDSD) Project. The HDSD project is designed to strengthen the quality-of-service delivery in education, improve the efficiency of social protection systems, and improve the effectiveness of labour market systems. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, and Information Technology (MoFEP). The other participating ministries are the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth (MNOM); the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour (MoA); and the Ministry of Education, National Reconciliation (MoE).

1.2 The project is structured around the four following components:

- Component 1 - Strengthening Pedagogy for Basic and Special Needs Education
- Component 2 - Building Responsive Social Protection Service Delivery Systems
- Component 3 - Strengthening Labour Market Systems and Improving Skills Training of Poor and Vulnerable Populations
- Component 4 - Project Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

1.3 The MoE is tasked with the overall management of the education system in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). The MoE is supported by sustained investment in inclusive education and training. In fact, inclusiveness and equity are themes central to the education legal and policy framework in SVG¹. The Education Act (2006) clearly states that “all persons in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are entitled to receive an education appropriate to their needs”². The MoE further recognises that achieving true educational inclusion requires that students who have challenges or disabilities that can interfere with their learning are given the same access to educational opportunities as those who do not meet this criterion. These children may experience difficulties ranging from physical differences, problems with concentration, learning, speech, language, and perception, to problems with behaviour

¹ Situational Analysis of Children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2017 Pg. 50

² The Education Act, 2006, Pg. 14

and/or making and keeping friends, which mainstream educational institutions are not equipped to deal with. These difficulties may be due to one or more of the following:

- disorders which limit intellectual capacity
- psychiatric disorders
- emotional problems
- behavioural problems
- learning differences
- reduced mobility

1.4 Whilst the MoE has made significant strides to achieve equality and efficiency within SVG's education system, it is recognized that the current segregation of students with disabilities from mainstream educational institutions has created silos which isolate children as they grow, from their age-appropriate peers. This isolation further limits their ability to create and maintain successful professional and personal relationships and enhance their overall learning. Hence the MoE also recognizes that true inclusion means creating a supportive environment for all learners, including those with learning differences; creating a much more tolerant and understanding learning environment; ensuring that students feel that they are truly part of the school community. True inclusion means "all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools."³

1.5 In light of the foregoing, the MoE, under the aegis of the HDSD Project, is desirous of transitioning all students from The Sunshine School into public primary and secondary schools in Bequia, for the academic year 2023/2024. Whilst the MoE is desirous of moving to full inclusion on mainland, Bequia was chosen for this pilot activity to assess the feasibility of a full-scale approach in the future.

1.6 There are currently three (3) public schools in Bequia; two (2) primary schools (the Paget Farm Government School and the Bequia Anglican Primary School), and one (1) secondary school (the Bequia Community High School). As with all public primary and secondary schools, students spend 6 to 7 years in the primary grades and a minimum of 5 years at the secondary level. Upon completion of training at the secondary level, students are encouraged to seek certification in a wide range of subject areas from accredited educational institutions. This certification is usually needed for enrolment at tertiary institutions and for job placement.

1.7 All public primary and secondary schools in SVG, inclusive of the abovementioned schools follow a common national curriculum based on (i) training in core and foundation subjects, and (ii) work-related learning, as outlined within the Education Act (2006). However outdated teaching modes, teacher-centered classroom and assessment practices, the lack of parental involvement in teaching values, and low emphasis on diversity in the classroom for children with special education needs, made it incumbent upon in-service teacher training programmes, such as that currently funded by the HDSD Project, to improve classroom instruction.

³ <https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education>

1.8 The main objective of this in-service training, currently facilitated by Brock University, in collaboration with Niagara College (Canada), seeks to encourage greater emphasis on student-centered learning, formative assessment strategies, parental involvement, and special education in the teacher training curriculum⁴. More specifically, the collaborating educational institutions are tasked with delivering intensive training to over 100 educators from mainstream primary and secondary schools in 21st century learning, formative assessment, differentiated instruction and effective online Teaching. Brock University has been an essential part of the consortium delivering in-service teacher training to some 140 teachers in SVG, with a pilot conducted in 2021 and the full roll out scheduled for April 2023. Members of the Brock University Team have led in providing training of Special Education Teachers and Assistants at the three special needs schools in SVG and in May of 2022 completed intensive face to face session with both parents and teachers at all three special needs schools. These training sessions have helped to increase the share of teachers in SVG rated as effective on classroom practices; increase the capacity of the MoE to provide continuous, evidence-based, and effective teacher professional development; and ultimately deepen the understanding of inclusive educations.

1.9 By further utilising the direct support of Brock University, this inclusive education pilot initiative will continue to support the development of a robust and effective education system based around effective inclusive practices. Teachers will learn specific research-based strategies, best practices, and gain resources needed to implement true inclusion within the classroom. The decision to attain direct support from Brock University lies not only in the institution's experience of exceptional worth gained from the aforementioned assignment but in the country and territory in which it is located.

1.10 Canada has made inclusion a hallmark of its educational systems ⁵; extensive legislation and policy transformation in Canada has resulted in greater inclusion and stigma reduction among its public educational institutions. More specifically, several provincial and territorial policies related to inclusive education have been re-imagined ensuring equal access and opportunity to all students. The results of numerous studies have suggested that inclusion has become the model of choice for the Ontario, the location in which the institution is based; most students with special educational needs are educated in regular classrooms ⁶. This means that students receive targeted personalised instruction to learn academically, socially and emotionally with their peers. Targeted training facilitated by Brock University and active collaboration with other educational leaders, institutions, and key stakeholders from Ontario should expand SVG's vision of inclusive education.

⁴ https://genbase.iiep.unesco.org/workspace/applis/epidoc/fichiers/EPIDOC/39223_G039223.pdf

⁵ Hinz, A. (2006). *A World of Difference: Inclusive Education in Canada and Germany*. Education Canada, 46(1).

⁶ Specht, J., McGhie-Richmond, D., Loreman, T., Mirenda, P., Bennett, S., Gallagher, T., et al. (2016). Teaching in inclusive classrooms: Efficacy and beliefs of Canadian preservice teachers. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(1), 1–15.

1.11 Likewise, it is expected that all activities within this Pilot Inclusion Initiative will seek to establish an exemplar for inclusive education for the country and ultimately eliminate current barriers including social stigma and discrimination towards people with disabilities.

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

2.4 General Objective

The main objective of the Special Education Teacher Assistant is to support class teachers at the two designated public schools, BAPS and BCH as they receive and or increase their capacity to work with students with disabilities who are either already in the school or will be attending of the schools for the first time.

2.5 Specific Objectives

To work under the instruction and/or direction of senior managers and/or teaching staff to support the delivery of quality learning and teaching of students who have a range of significant and often complex special education needs, stemming from social, emotional, behavioural, mental and physical disabilities, as well as profound and multiple, severe or moderate learning difficulties.

2.5.1 To undertake specified work with individuals and groups under the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher.

2.5.2 To encourage the participation of students in the social and academic processes of the school and enable students to become more independent learners.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

Depending upon the level of the student's disability, the students' age and the type of classroom the student is assigned; the instructional, organisational, behavioural, management, and administrative support to be provided by the Special Education Teacher Assistant will vary. However, the main duties are as follows:

3.1. Assist the class teacher (s) in conducting a comprehensive pre-assessment evaluation to assess the different levels of students under the consultant's remit.

3.2. Collaborate with teachers and parents in the preparation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

3.3. Assist students in individual, small group, or large group settings as assigned, to implement instructional programmes and lessons plans, and reinforce learning concepts.

One-on-One sessions may be required in areas including but not limited to Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Life Skills, and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

3.4. Where appropriate and necessary support students with mobility and communication needs.

3.5. Assist the class teacher(s) in preparing classroom activities, assignments and/or learning and support materials for the purpose of supporting and reinforcing classroom objectives, and enhancing learning for students with disabilities.

3.6. Following the guidance from the teacher, co-lead or lead a variety of classroom activities aimed at building students' social, behavioral, and mental health. These activities can include games and socialisation opportunities for students with disabilities such as autism or adapted physical education activities for students with physical impairments.

3.7. Assist in the transition from one learning activity to another (especially if the activity is in another room/ location). This may require setting up teaching resources, student worksheets, art supplies etc.

3.8. Maintain classroom equipment and work areas for the purpose of ensuring availability of safe learning environments and/or meeting mandated requirements for effective learning.

3.9. Assist the class teacher(s) in instructing and developing positive behavioral skills and daily living skills for students to direct their own personal care and to foster independence.

3.10. Assist the class teacher(s) with the administration and analysis of appropriate academic and behavioural assessment tools.

3.11. Support and enhance behavioural approaches to keep students on track academically

3.12. Monitor students' daily schedule and behaviour plan (e.g., class schedule, toileting, medication, appetite, etc.).

3.13. Teach and model appropriate engagement in learning and socializing and support and encourage self-regulation.

3.14. Attend to the physical needs of students as needed. This may include handling equipment such as, wheelchairs and orthotic devices such as braces, used by students with physical disabilities.

- 3.15. Assist in serving and preparing students for feeding routines (washing hands, replacing plates and cutlery etc.) and in cleaning up after meals.
- 3.16. Accompany students to the bathroom and assist students with personal care tasks, including but not limited to, hygiene, toileting, and wash-up routines, as requested by the class teacher(s).
- 3.17. Monitor, supervise and assist students during other non-instructional periods within a variety of school environments (e.g., playgrounds, hallways, bus loading zones, assemblies, field trips, etc.) for the purpose of maintaining a safe and positive learning environment.
- 3.18. Attend meetings, training, and professional learning sessions (e.g., first aid, CPR, emergency procedures, behaviour management, etc.) for the purpose of acquiring and/or conveying new information relative to job functions within these terms of reference.
- 3.19. Respond to emergency situations (e.g., injured students, other methodical emergencies, fights, etc.) for the purpose of resolving immediate safety concerns and/or directing to appropriate personnel for resolution.
- 3.20. Communicate effectively with staff, students, and/or parents regarding needs and concerns during class briefings.
- 3.21. Prepare and submit reports on student outcomes, for teachers and parents to demonstrate the student's academic and behavioural progress as requested, especially if behavioral and academic changes are part of students' intervention.
- 3.22. Perform other related duties as assigned for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the work unit.

4. DELIVERABLES

- 4.1. Submission of a report on the results of the pre-assessment evaluation conducted on the different levels of the students under the consultant's remit.
- 4.2. Submission of Monthly Time Sheets and Monthly Progress Reports which should highlight the following:
- 4.2.1. General Progress of individual students or groups under his/her remit;
 - 4.2.2. Observations on learning styles exhibited by students under his/her remit;
 - 4.2.3. Lessons learnt throughout classroom instruction; and
 - 4.2.4. Recommendations based on lessons learnt.

4.3. Submission of a Final Report which should be a summary of the activities undertaken, successes, challenges, results (planned and unplanned), main lessons identified and recommendations on how to address those lessons.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONSULTANT

Type of Consultancy:	Individual
Procurement Method:	Individual Consultant Selection
Length and Duration:	<p>The consultant will be contracted for a period Six (6) months commencing July 2023 until December 2023 in the first instance.</p> <p>The consultant will be subject to an initial one-month period of probation. The services of the consultant may be terminated at the end of the probation period, if his/her performance is found to be unsatisfactory.</p>
Place of work:	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Qualifications and experience:	<p>The Consultant shall at a minimum, possess the following qualifications and experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of five (5) CSEC passes inclusive of mathematics and English. • At least two (2) years' experience working with, caring for and/or volunteering with students/persons with learning, behavioural, intellectual, and/or physical challenges, and evidence of training in interacting with and/or teaching persons with special educational needs. Evidence of training in the course "Catering to Students with Special Educational Needs" offered by the Saint Vincent Community College or any similar training would be an asset. <i>an additional two (2) years of experience specified above may substitute for formal training not received.</i> • Current First Aid / CPR training would be an asset. • The candidate must pass a criminal history background check to be considered for the consultancy.

Assets and Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to interact and communicate effectively with children with cognitive impairments. • Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to build effective working relationships with staff, students, parents, public and professional networks. • Ability to work collaboratively as a team member and independently. • Excellent organisational and time management skills. • Ability to operate a computer and related software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint. • Keep accurate records and submit reports in a timely manner. • Meet physical requirements necessary to perform assigned duties in a safe and effective manner for self and others.
Physical Requirements	<p>The physical demands described below are representative of those that must be met by the consultant to successfully perform the essential functions of this consultancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently required to communicate with students and staff • The HDSD Project is committed to creating the least restrictive environment for all qualified applicants, however repetitive motions of the following actions may be required: grasping, pushing, sitting, standing, walking, running, reaching, stooping, kneeling, crouching, balance, climbing, crawling, pulling and lifting. • Must be able to observe students and ensure their safety. • May be required to assist in the movement of students with reduced mobility at any given time.

ork Environment	<p>Consultants must be able to function in the following environmental or atmospheric conditions commonly associated with the performance of the functions of this consultancy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be exposed to inclement outdoor weather conditions. • May be exposed to potentially hazardous bodily fluids when assisting students with physical needs. • May be required to work in a physically hazardous setting when a student is in crisis.
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6. INPUTS BY THE CLIENT

6.1 The MoE and the educational institution to which the consultant is assigned will provide the consultant with all relevant documentation and resources to facilitate the completion of the consultancy.

6.2 The Educational Institution to which the consultant is assigned will provide desk space to the consultant to carry out the tasks if necessary.

6.3 The MoE through the educational institution to which the consultant is assigned, will conduct a two-day workshop, and commits to executing a five-day highly supervised orientation and assessment of the consultants, at the start of the consultancy.

7. REPORTING/ SUPERVISION

7.1. The Project Coordinator of the HDSD Project (under the aegis of the MoFEP) will have general oversight of the consultant's work.

7.2 The Consultant will coordinate and work closely with the designated officers of the MoE and class teacher(s) and Principal of the Educational Institution to the consultants are assigned to carry out the functions under these TORs.

7.3 The day-to-day activities and tasks of the consultant will be managed by the Principal and/or his/her designate at each school.

7.4 All deliverables shall be submitted to the Principal and/or designated officers of the assigned school, and the Project Coordinator for review and approval.

8. COMPENSATION

8.1 The Consultant will be paid an hourly rate commensurate with the services provided.

9. TERMINATION

9.1 The Client may terminate the consultancy with prior written notice to the Consultant if the Consultant does not remedy a failure in the performance of his/her obligations under the Contract; if the Consultant, has engaged in corrupt, fraudulent, collusive, coercive, or obstructive practices in performing the Contract.

9.2 The Consultant may terminate the consultancy with prior written notice, if the Client shall fail to perform any of its agreed obligations to the consultant.

9.3 The Client shall terminate the consultancy with immediate effect, when the safety or welfare of the school(s) or the student(s) are threatened or when the Consultant has been suspected and/or charged by summons, warrant, indictment or information with the commission of a felony, a misdemeanor involving, sexual assault; obscenity and related offenses; drugs; moral turpitude; neglect; or the physical or sexual abuse of a child and/student; or any other equivalent offenses.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

10.1 The consultant shall maintain full confidentiality of all documentation and discretion in the dissemination of results. The consultant may not utilise, without prior approval from the MoE, MoFEP, or any other related Ministry or Agency, the information for presentations or studies related to this consultancy.